

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 589

EM 009 429

TITLE Some Suggestions for Conducting Film Competitions and Film Festivals.
INSTITUTION Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 14p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Films; *Film Study; Projection Equipment; *Student Projects
IDENTIFIERS *Film Festivals

ABSTRACT

Four essentials in staging film festivals and competitions are: facilities, films, equipment, and an audience. Basic steps in getting these essentials together are outlined. Surveying available facilities first helps you gauge the scale of the festival, estimate the likely costs and receipts, and plan for the projection equipment necessary. Commercial films may sometimes be available free if your festival is not aimed at making a profit. In competitions, films must be solicited, a jury chosen, and decisions about prize-giving made. Equipment should be ordered well in advance of the event. Advertising is important in getting an audience, and the pacing of films during a showing is important in keeping them interested. Appendixes provide a list of international competitive film categories and a sample release form. (JK)

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR
CONDUCTING FILM COMPETITIONS
AND FILM FESTIVALS

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I.

Film festivals are usually less complicated than film competitions.

Four major problems that confront you in designing the festival are:

1. getting FACILITIES
2. getting FILMS
3. getting EQUIPMENT
4. getting an AUDIENCE

Let us examine each of these four problems briefly.

GETTING FACILITIES

You may wish to survey available facilities before you even think about films, equipment, and audiences. Why? You want to know how many people you can comfortably seat. This is very important, because it will help you to figure out maximum possible door receipts, projection requirements, overhead costs, and even the kinds of films you can reasonably consider. Now ask yourself, "What kinds of facilities are available to me?"

Your film festival may be associated with a profit-making or a non-profit organization. If that organization is a school or church, you may be able to use the building facilities of the organization. But your affiliates may not have building facilities. In such a case, you may wish to inquire about the possibilities of using a small local theatre, public auditorium, hotel, school, church, storefront, or other facility with sufficient capacity for seating the

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desired number of persons. In any case, your objective of making money will make the rental cost of the room or auditorium a major factor. Also find out if your facilities charge extra for providing ushers, ticket takers, guards or custodians, and cleaning personnel. Maybe you can provide your own volunteers.

Presume that you have just found a place in which to hold your festival. How big is it? How big a projector will you need? If you have a large room or a small auditorium, you will need an arc lamp projector to give sufficient brightness to the screen image. Too weak a light source will give your audience eye strain after several hours of viewing. Also, if you are counting on a large audience in a large room or small auditorium, you may wish to limit your showings to 16mm film and larger. Arc lamp projectors for 8mm or Super 8 film may be difficult to procure. Your picture quality might also suffer if you project small format films over a great distance.

You may wish to purchase the \$2 KODAK PROJECTION CALCULATOR AND SEATING GUIDE (S-16) to ascertain the four projection factors of image/screen size, frame size, projection distance, and lens focal length. Your correct appraisal of projection conditions will strongly affect the comfort of the audience. You might wish to refer to Kodak's pamphlet REFLECTION CHARACTERISTICS OF FRONT-PROJECTION SCREEN MATERIALS (free) in choosing an appropriate screen for the festival. Also useful for determining projection characteristics is publication (S-15-20) A GUIDE TO OBTAINING GOOD PROJECTED IMAGE BRIGHTNESS.

Having determined what projection equipment you want, you may inquire locally about the availability (rental, borrowing, purchase) of the desired equipment. You may want to make lists of the price estimates, so that you may easily determine the price per person that you will charge at the door.

Now you know how many people you can accommodate, what gauges and lengths of films you can show (by knowing what projection equipment is available), the most effective projection distances and screen characteristics, and the costs for facilities and basic projection equipment. Knowing the floor plan of the auditorium you are using, you can assess the number of extensions you will need for power cords. If you plug projectors into a circuit on the houselight panel, you may find the projector lights dimming with the houselights. You must find out whether it is possible to hook up the sound systems of the projectors you are using with the existing sound system in the auditorium. Since it is advisable to have two projectors on hand (to avoid gaps in the program for rewinding films, changing burnt out bulbs, etc.), you may wish to use two channels of the auditorium's sound system. If the large room or auditorium is not equipped with a sound system, you will want to assure that you have sufficient speaker output for your audience size. You may wish to consult somebody who is knowledgeable in sound systems to advise you. You will probably want to determine rental prices for auxiliary sound equipment as well. If your festival will show student films that are accompanied by a tape-recorded sound track you will also wish to provide tape recorders for them.

GUARD AGAINST FAILURE! If your projectors will have light bulbs or exciter lamps, have extras on hand. If your equipment requires fuses, have extras on hand. Plugs sometimes need adapters. This applies to power cord plugs, and jack plugs for microphones, and output jacks for speakers. Have some adapters. Since you know that films can and WILL break on occasion, be sure to have a film splicer so that you can patch them up in a hurry. You may even wish to have separate rewind facilities and an appropriate number of extra rewind reels so that you can take films off the projector as soon as you have finished showing them. In short, plan for the worst. Then, if anything goes wrong, you will be in control of the situation. Now that you have your facilities planned and your resources assessed, you are ready to think about the content of the festival.

GETTING FILMS

You have to decide now! What films will be shown? Will the films compete with each other? How will I get and schedule the films? These questions can be answered in a variety of ways. Let's look at a few of them.

Maybe your objective is to get people interested in films for aesthetic or academic reasons. In such a case you may wish to use only films made by well known professionals. This may simplify your list of problems. If you are promoting a film study or discussion group for a school or church or library, you can write to commercial film distributors and tell them of the promotional nature of your festival. They may see fit to allow you to use their films at no cost.

Free films would reduce your operating costs significantly. You may wish to use the net proceeds of the festival to begin a film study or film making program. If so, state your objective when you write to the distributors. Distributors may provide free films for your festival if they see that they will earn subsequent rental dollars from your promotion.

You may be holding the festival or competition as a profit-making business venture. In such a case, you may have to pay the full rental price for the films you show. Consider the rental fee an operating cost and subtract it from your gross take in addition to the admission tax you may have to pay. Regardless of the rationale for your festival or competition, you will wish to take certain precautions in administration of certain factors. Projectionists should be trained to "cue up" films so that the projection of each title does not begin with nine seconds of academy leader. (9 - 8 - 7 - 6 - etc.) Two projectors are needed to reduce the amount of time that would be lost in rewinding and reloading before showing the next title. Refreshments may be given out or sold to assure that the breaks are as pleasurable as the showings. You might also wish to purchase some insurance covering film prints, shipping, your staff and the audience.

If you are getting films for a film competition, you have a number of questions to ask yourself at the onset. First of all, what categories do you want to have?

- A. Will this just be a student competition? Will participating students be restricted to the local, regional, national, or international domain.

- B. Will there be categories for short subjects, T.V. commercials, business and informational films, feature films, or films for children?

For suggested lists of categories see Appendix I. You may wish to begin with a festival very limited in scope at first. Later, when you have acquired experience in festival and competition management, you may wish to expand the number of categories you have to allure participants.

When you have limited the categories of films to be accepted for competition in a festival, you will wish to design entry forms.

These entry forms are suggested to include:

1. the names of producer, director and writer of the film,
2. the (English) title of the film,
3. the date of the completion of the film,
4. the age(s) of the producer, director, and writer of the film (if there are age restrictions),
5. the address of the person submitting the film,
6. the running time and number of reels for the film,
7. the gauge of the film (8mm, Super 8, 16mm, 35mm and 70mm),
8. whether it is a silent or sound film (and if it is a sound film ask whether it has optical or magnetic sound or tape recorded synchronous sound),
9. SPECIAL INFORMATION:
 - a. If a feature film, names of prominent actors, etc.
 - b. If business or commercial films, name of client.
 - c. If T.V. productions, name series to which they belong.
 - d. If T.V. commercials, name agency, writer, and production house that were involved.
10. whether it is a live or an animated film.
11. INCLUDE THE DEADLINE DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES IN BOLD FACE TYPE ON THE FRONT OF THE ENTRY FORM! Save yourself heartache and trouble by adhering to the date you set, WITHOUT EXCEPTION!

Limit your liability when you hold a film competition. State what you feel to be your responsibility, as well as what you feel is not

your responsibility. If a participant sends you the only copy he owns of a movie he has invested many hours of his life in, he will consider you to be at fault if his masterpiece is lost in the mail, damaged in handling, or otherwise lost or mistreated. He may also be offended if you pack his film in a can that is cheaper than the one he shipped the entry in. These are only a few of the areas of sensitivity that competitors in film festivals will bring to your attention. DON'T be FRIGHTENED. You can state the limitation of your liability, so that the participants and competitors will know where you stand. Remember to insure yourself.

Let the film makers know that they must limit their liability as well. When a film maker uses a model or actor who is recognizable in the movie shown at your festival, you or the film maker is liable for any damages that might result. It is therefore recommended that film makers have their actors and models sign RELEASES. This limits your and the film maker's liability. In addition, any copyrighted music must be cleared before use. Just as the high school drama coach often has to pay \$50 for the use of a play he wishes to stage, film makers must pay a royalty or have signed releases for the music they use in the movie. Exceptions obtain where the film maker has written the music himself. However, let film makers know the extent of their liability. Tell them to get releases where necessary. For an example of a RELEASE, see appendix II.

Getting and returning films from participants in competitive festivals can be difficult if you don't specify handling procedures. You may

wish to recommend handling and shipping procedures such as:

1. All films must be on reels not cores.
2. Entries must be labelled by reel and by can with the English title and the order of projection.
3. Titles must be written in black ink on white leader for each reel of film (specify reel number for ease in projection).
4. Cost of transportation for the film going to and from the festival must be paid by the competitor.
5. NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER deadline date.
6. Return address and zip code of participant must be written on leader, film cans, and film boxes.
7. The value of film for insurance must be determined.
8. Ascertain import/export duties for all allowable films.
9. Foreign entries may be shipped through consulate if your festival is not a commercial enterprise.

Let us presume that you have printed and mailed your announcements, provided facilities for receiving requests for entry, hired a secretary to mail out entry blanks and to categorize incoming films for prejudging. Now ask yourself, "Who is going to judge these films?" You may want a committee as small as three or as large as a baker's dozen to judge the entries. The committee will have to adopt a scoring system. They will be encouraged to avoid abstention. If an odd number of people is on the judging committee, you will avoid deadlock and "draw" votes if every member of the committee MUST vote. Your committee may use a positive or negative scoring system. The positive system accords points to each of a number of pre-listed good qualities for films. The negative system accords "Demerit" points for errors in technique, aesthetic, execution and so forth. In fact, you may do whatever turns you on.

Your jury may come together and decide upon the rules for prescreening

and prejudging all entries. No favoritism should be shown to friends of the management. The prescreening will assure that the audience is not exposed to unworthy films during the competition. Perhaps jurors will even decide to solicit the cooperation of some sustaining patrons who will provide prestigious names to pass on the prizes. Shortly after your entry deadline, you will be able to prescreen and prejudge the films to select those that are worthy of competing in your festival. Do not hesitate to judge films with fairly strict standards, because there's nothing deadlier than sitting in the audience for 50 to 500 minutes viewing eye-aching drivel. Nor is there anything more embarrassing than giving away a lot of money and trophies to the people who produced hours of eye-aching drivel.

Your jury may serve another purpose as well. They may help you to design follow-up letters for the festival. Not everybody will win. Letters of consolation, therefore, are required or, at least, are courteous. Letters of congratulations or award may be sent to winners with their prizes. Perhaps the jury will wish to design certificates of award that will look nice and make winners feel that much better. In addition, juries sometimes do award secondary honorable mentions to everyone whose film is good enough to be shown in the competition.

The jury might also act as a committee to arrange for renting or alerting parking facilities in the vicinity. They may wish to audition possible masters of ceremonies, who will be very important in the smooth functioning of your festival. The master of ceremonies should write and deliver brief synopses of the films to be shown and

should gather biographical material about the film makers for presentation before the showing of each film. An impartial but well-written introduction to each film will be welcome by the audience.

Probably the most difficult to coordinate, yet very important, function in the festival will be the presentation of awards. How will this be done? Who will present the awards? Should the presenter be a well known cinematographer, director, producer or writer? The jury should be allowed to participate in these decisions as well. When the decisions have been made and the order of events is established, an individual can be put in charge of designing the printed program, the bulletin board notices, the direct-mail flyers, and so forth.

GETTING EQUIPMENT

Order equipment well in advance of your festival. Early orders will assure that the arc-lamp projectors you need will be set aside for you in advance, and you won't have to scrimp for them at the last moment. In most cases, you can tell your A-V Dealer or equipment rental agent your needs, and he will foresee some of the additional needs such as extra lamps, adapters for power and output plugs, and so forth. He will also tell you the prices of the items you will rent, so that you can fairly determine how much you will charge participants in the festival. (This will include entry fees for those submitting films, and door price for those who will sit in the audience.)

You might even be wise to draw up a checklist of the things you need. Then, when the equipment has been shipped, you will be able to check it off as you unpack it. Such precautions assure that things are

there when you need them. Do not hesitate to call on the equipment dealers in your community. They may be very helpful. Be sure that you have people to run the equipment who are familiar with it. This may require training some personnel in advance of the festival.

GETTING AN AUDIENCE

Your audience is the most critical problem you face! You must accommodate their needs in several ways. You are encouraged to schedule films with the audience in mind. You don't have to keep them crying continuously for several hours. Neither do you have to keep them laughing continuously for several hours. PACING is very important in scheduling the films. Perhaps your judges will help with the scheduling.

When your audience has been seated for just so long a time, they will become twittery and twitchy. That's precisely the time when you schedule a coffee break. Don't serve heavy pastries or snacks during these breaks or snoring will drown out the sound tracks.

How are you going to get the audience in there? How can you be sure you will have enough people to make the festival achieve your goals? This can be done through location, timing and advertising. If you choose a location for the festival that is central to many activities, you will assure that many people can get there easily. If you choose a time, such that your festival is not in competition with other (more popular or attractive) activities you will assure a larger audience.

Your advertising must go to far more people than you anticipate. Sometimes it is beneficial to consider that five percent of the advertising you send out will be effective. Use all the media that are at your disposal. If you are a non-profit organization, take advantage of community service announcements of local radio and television stations. Use the community calendar in your local newspapers. Church, school, and community agency newsletters will provide advertising space. Make flyers on an available ditto, mimeograph or other duplicating machine. Post signs on bulletin boards. Call your friends. Make announcements at meetings and conferences. Invite dignitaries. Exploit every available communications channel.

Design each message for the audience. Tell them about the fun they will have, the number of films to be shown (or entries expected in the competition), speak of the refreshments that will be served, and tell them they can't miss THE EVENT OF THE YEAR!

With a little luck, you'll pack the house! Here's wishing you luck!

Appendix I:
International Competitive
Film Categories

13.

Listed below are some selected international competitive film categories and some of the international competitions in which they are used. The numbering of the festivals in which certain categories are used does not reflect any qualitative judgments and is purely arbitrary.

FEATURE FILMS (4)

SHORT SUBJECTS (1) (4) (6) (9)

TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS (4)

STUDENT FILMS (1) (4) (6) (7) (9) (10)

U. S. TELEVISION COMMERCIALS (3) (4) (5) (9)

T.V. / THEATRICAL COMMERCIALS (3) (4) (5) (9)

BUSINESS AND INFORMATIONAL FILMS (3) (4) (5) (9)

FILMS FOR CHILDREN (1) (4) (6)

EDUCATIONAL FILMS (3) (4) (5) (6) (9)

ANIMATED FILMS (1) (3) (4) (5) (6) (6-7) (9)

DOCUMENTARY FILMS (1) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (9)

EXPERIMENTAL FILMS (1) (4) (6)

SAFETY FILMS (2) (3) (6)

INDEX TO CONTESTS AS NUMBERED ABOVE:

1. Malta Amateur Cine Circle, P. O. Box 450, Valletta, Malta
2. National Committee on Films for Safety, 425 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60611
3. U. S. Industrial Film Festival, 161 East Grand Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60611
4. Chicago International Film Festival, 235 West Eugenie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60614
5. International Film and TV Festival of New York, 121 West 45th St., New York, New York 10036
6. Council on International Non-Theatrical Events, 1201 Sixteenth St. N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036
7. Teen-Age Movie Awards, Eastman Kodak Company, 343 State Street, Rochester, New York 14650
8. Film Council of Greater Columbus, 83 South High Street, Room 212, Columbus, Ohio 43215
9. Atlanta International Film Festival, Drawer 1325K, Atlanta, Georgia 30324
10. Photographic Society of America, Motion Picture Division, International, Homewood, Illinois 60430

Appendix II:
Model Release Forms

14.

Below is a sample of a model release form. Note that the signature on the form must be that of a person over twenty-one years of age. When models or actors are minors, the release must be signed by a parent or guardian. Usually, the release is signed in return for some monetary value received. Conventionally, one dollar is paid for the release, unless the model, actor, or other person signing the release has a contract with the film maker or his company. Having releases from all recognizable models and actors in the films shown at your festival will protect you and the film makers your festival represents.

Print or Type Name

Last name

Middle Initial

First Name

Social Security Number

Date

I hereby affirm that I am the ^{parent.} guardian of (_____).

and for the value received and without further consideration, I hereby irrevocably consent that the photographs taken of her by (_____) ^{him},
(Name of person who took picture)

*(negatives or prints of which are hereto attached)

*(at _____ on _____ 19 _____) or any reproduction of same,

may be used by _____ or any of its associate companies,
(Your Organization)
or by others with the consent of EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, for the purposes of illustration, advertising, or publication in any manner.

Order No.	
Time	

(Signature of parent or guardian)

(Address)

(Signature of witness)

(Address of witness)

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*Delete inapplicable
alternative